REMARKS

This amendment responds to the Office Action mailed on April 7, 2004. Claims 1-13 are pending; claim 1 has been amended and claims 14-16 have been canceled.

Claim **1** was rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,418,658 of Knickrehm ("KNICKREHM"). Claim 1 has been amended to further define the position of the slot as "being positioned so as to to receive the fishing line while the clamp is secured to the fishing rod and to permit passage of the fishing line into the bore and out from the bore." In contrast, the fishing line cleaner device of Knickrehm can only receive a fishing line when the clamp is in an open position, not when it is engaged to a fishing rod. When the latch 22 of Knickrehm is engaged, the lever 24 precludes transfer of the fishing line out of the cleaning tool. Further, Applicant submits that Knickrehm lacks a "gate" as claimed. The latch 22 of Knickrehm is part of the clamp mechansimm, and there is no counterpart to the gate recited in the pending claims, nor would a "gate" be necessary in the Knickrehm device because Knickrehm does not impose tension on a fishing line to avoid tangling as in the claimed invention. Consequently, claim 1 is not anticipated by Knickrehm.

The dependent claims are submitted to define over Knickrehm in view of their own further recitations. In addition, there is no gate nor is there a gate that overlies a top or bottom surface, as those surfaces are oriented and recited in **claim 9**. Neither is there a passage as recited in **claim 12**. Rather, the lever 24 engages detents 26 to secure the clamp in a closed position so as to engage the fishing rod, and so any modification to Knickrehm that provides a passage for access to the slot

would be contrary to the teachings of Knickrehm. Consequently, claim 12 is not obvious over Knickrehm. Neither is there any elmeent in Knickrehm overlying a portion of the bore that can correspond to the gate defined by **claim 13**.

With further regard to **claim 13**, which depends from claim 1 and includes all of its limitatinos, claim 13 was rejected as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 4,156,983 of Moore. Applicant respectfully traverses that rejection.

Moore lacks "a bore extending through the housing," and also does not have a "slot" that is "communication with the bore," as recited in claim 1. Instead, a fishing line is engaged external to a U-shaped housing by a snubber 20 that seats in a groove 18. The snubber of Moore is *pivotally* attached whereas the claims call for a gate that is *rigidly* disposed in spaced relation to the housing. This distinction is in original claim 1.

The amendments to claim 1 more particularly locate the "gate" relative to the housing as being "between the bore and the first wall so as to define a passage that impedes free passage of the fishing line out from the bore and into the slot yet which permits the fishing line to be guided by a fisherman into the bore." In contrast, the snubber of Moore is located so as to engage the fishing line without using a bore at all. Specifically, the arrangement of Moore has the fishing line seated within the groove 18, but that arrangement permits the line to oscillate toward the coil spring 28 near the pivot and the free end of the snubber 20 as the fishing line is taken up onto the reel. The fishing line can bind within the spring 28 and break, or move so close to the free end as to cause the snubber to disengage (either because the fishing line moves out of the snubber (leftward in Fig. 3)

or because the snubber releases ato the open position (shown in phantom line in Fig. 3). Thus, not only does Moore lack a bore, there is no gate arrangement provided that impedes free passage of the fishing line out from the bore yet which permits the fishing line to be guided by a fisherman into the bore.

In view of these distinctions, allowance of the claims is requested.

REMARKS

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

Dated: April 20, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

By _____

David Leason
Registration No.: 36,195
DARBY & DARBY P.C.
P.O. Box 5257
New York, New York 10150-5257
(212) 527-7700
(212) 753-6237 (Fax)
Attorneys/Agents For Applicant